

ADVERTISING

Social media presents brands with inspirational window to millennials

October 16, 2015



Image from SaksStyle

By STAFF REPORTS

NEW YORK Social media has opened the world up for millennials and for the first time has allowed luxury brands to directly interact with tomorrow's affluent consumers.

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During Luxury Interactive 2015's panel "Millennial Marketing – Tapping Into the Social-Obsessed Segment" on Oct. 15, executives from brands not typically associated with the millennial consumer discussed the importance of reaching out to this demographic while they are young to establish a connection and cement a bond that will mature as they age. Social media has emerged as the driving force behind these connections as various platforms allow the creativity and personalities of millennial consumers to flourish as they share and embrace their interests and passions.

Millennial moxie

For **Preferred Hotels & Resorts**, director of marketing Allison Masters explained that while the millennial consumer may not have the assets to book at its network of hotels, they are prolific at sharing images of their travels via social media, most notably Instagram. These images in turn serve as inspiration for the travels of other consumers who may be planning a dream vacation in a far flung destination.

Similarly, millennials for the most part cannot afford a Lexus and do not frequent dealership showrooms to browse, but social media has allowed the automaker to keep these consumers engaged. Lexus often uses social media channels, such as Tumblr, to up its "cool" by giving millennials a peek behind the garage door through touchpoints exploring the automaker's technology and overall brand message.



From left to right: Moderator Pat Galvin, Group VP of Oracle Marketing Cloud with Ms. Lee, Ms. Bennett and Ms. Masters

Lexus' national manager, digital & relationship marketer Jeanice Lee explained that while millennials are not often purchasing their own Lexus models, there is a chance that they are vocal on their preferences and interest in the automaker if a parent is considering purchasing a new vehicle. It is also safe to assume that when booking travel, the parents of millennials welcome their childrens' recommendations and preferences.

As for beauty brand Elizabeth Arden millennials may not be in the market for \$100 skincare, but they do have access to entry-level products such as a \$20 lip gloss.

The three panelists agreed that Instagram presents marketers with the most opportunities to reach millennial consumers due to the platform's visual and fun nature. But, they have spread their wings outward from the standard Facebook and Twitter accounts, especially when it comes to local social media channels in various markets.

Ms. Lee of Lexus did note, though, that brands should be conscious of how millennials use social media, often not pledging loyalty to a particular channel. This becomes even more true when advertising becomes obvious, thus showing the importance of well-integrated brand content that does not appear pushy or overtly branded.

In addition, Christina Bennett, senior director global public relations at Elizabeth Arden, shared how the brand has been successful in tapping into millennials through blogger influencers. When done well, blogger content can "move the needle" for a specific product and present the brand to an audience that may be unfamiliar.

Since fashion bloggers arrived on the scene about a decade ago, they have gained influence and grown to be leaders in the industry, says a report by Fashionbi.

As these bloggers gained an audience, brands began to partner with them for advertising campaigns, events and other marketing efforts. While it may seem that fashion bloggers are losing their luster, they still have large followings that can rival magazines, creating an opportunity for luxury brands to reach a large, fashion-focused audience ([see story](#)).